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**COMMONWEAL**

*A Weekly Review of Literature  
the Arts and Public Affairs*

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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VOLUME XXX      October 20, 1939      NUMBER 26

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THE COMMONWEAL is indexed in the *Reader's Guide*,  
*Catholic Periodical Index* and *Catholic Bookman*.

Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York.  
Annual Subscriptions: U. S. and Canada, \$5.00; Foreign, \$6.00.

**The Papacy and Poland**

NOTHING anywhere near approaching an authoritative report has been issued giving the Vatican's views on the Hitler peace offensive.

Which Pope's reaction as very mixed  
Will Not (without, perhaps, straining the  
Die imagination), sharply condemning  
the idea of leaving all Eastern and

Southeastern Europe to the tender mercies of the Reich and the Soviets, and at the same time relieved at the proposal for the establishment of some kind of new Poland, and relieved at the restraint in military tone. It is expected now that the long-predicted encyclical of the Pope will be delayed beyond the Feast of Christ the King (October 29) so that French and British reaction to the peace offensive will have plenty of time to mature. Within the subject of the war, Pope Pius has expressed himself chiefly in regard to Poland.

His moving address to the Polish pilgrims was widely reported. "We do not say to you, 'Dry your tears.' Christ, Who wept over Lazarus and the ruin of his country, will one day intervene to reward those tears you shed over your dear dead and over that Poland which will not die. . . ." It is naturally impossible to know exactly to what extent or in what sense the Pope expects to see Poland live—beyond its existence as a faithful Christian people. But the Vatican apparently continues to recognize the Polish government which Hitler and Stalin claim to have wiped out. The Polish ambassador to the Vatican has informed the Papal state department that he now represents the new Polish president and Paris Polish government, and he has certainly not been rebuffed. Already the Catholic Uniat Archbishop Andreas Szeptyki has been deported from his Ukrainian people to inner Russia, and it is reported that Russia has already forbidden clerical dress in the territory newly under its control. Already the war creates terrible difficulties for the Pope, whose love for his children "knows no frontiers."

**The Terms of the Equation**

HITLER'S Reichstag speech is a magnificent specimen of his abilities as a demagogue. With

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| utter conviction he presents a picture that cannot fail to be acceptable to his own people, convincing them of his (and their) sweetness and light. And the picture has in |  |
| Peace  | utter conviction he presents a picture that cannot fail to be acceptable to his own people, convincing them of his (and their) sweetness and light. And the picture has in |
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| Truce  | utter conviction he presents a picture that cannot fail to be acceptable to his own people, convincing them of his (and their) sweetness and light. And the picture has in |

it more than enough truth to disconcert a reader or listener. It is interesting to observe the way in which he follows his enemies' suit by insisting that he is not against the French or English people, but against "certain British statesmen and journalists," by insisting upon the imperialistic attitude of Poland which "forced" Germany into a war of defense. For Hitler seems to have learned extremely well the lesson he said the Allies taught him in the last war—how to use effectively the great weapon of the lie. His peace terms are pretty definite: Germany and Russia are to be allowed to dominate eastern Europe; he promises to let the west alone. If France and England will agree to this, the world can have a truce. If not, Europe will be devastated. This, of course, is intended to put the blame for continuing war on France and England, and it can do so in the eyes at least of the German people. It also seems to require that, if they will not accept these terms, the French and English should state far more definitely their own objectives.

It is hard to see how any lasting peace is possible in the world as long as it continues acting the way it has the last quarter century. Suppose the Allies continue fighting and win. Will they try another Versailles? Even they admit that was wrong. Will they let Germany continue a

strong power, only insisting upon a new system of government? Then, in the long run, Hitler will have succeeded. Will they impose something stiffer than Versailles? Nothing short of annihilation of the German people seems likely to prevent Germany's once more becoming strong and threatening another war. Suppose the Allies accept Hitler's terms. They must demand guarantees. What guarantees can he give? There is no way in the world today whereby he could give any acceptable guarantees. The only imaginable way guarantees can be given is through some form of international organization, and no such thing effectively exists. That would seem to point to the only positive war objective, and one which vitally affects every inhabitant of the globe—a viable machinery for settling international disputes without war. If we cannot achieve that by using the race's collective good will, it may very well be achieved for us in the future by the coming into being of some world-dominating empire of force. Or else civilization will destroy itself.

### *The AFL and the CIO*

AS BOTH LABOR GROUPS commenced their annual conventions, unity between them appeared no nearer than ever. The AFL threw responsibility for the next step upon the CIO. The AFL continues to maintain a negotiating committee and avows its willingness to hear any proposals which its rivals may suggest, but undertakes no initiative of its own. One of its chief problems during the convention was jurisdictional disputes within its own ranks. It was unwilling to branch out. John L. Lewis's report to the CIO convention had nothing optimistic or helpful to say about the question. Peace between the American labor sections remains far away.

The approach of the two organizations to the European war proved interesting. Both, of course, registered strong desires to keep America out of the war. Neither took a specific line on the neutrality law. But there was an almost essential difference in their treatment of the problem, if the first few and abbreviated reports reflected the two meetings. The AFL stirred up terrific excitement over democracy and America's way of doing things. The preservation of this democracy and American system were made primary to labor activity. The "enemies within our gates," that is everything nazi, fascist and communist, were bitterly assailed. Finally, an autonomous organization was formed and held its first meeting right along with the convention: the League for Human Rights, Freedom and Democracy. Mr. Lewis's annual report took a more self-critical view of things. Because of the supposed "delicacy" of the communist and red-baiting issues (especially in

San Francisco, home bailiwick of Harry Bridges who is host to the convention) no explicit condemnations of the three *isms* was expected, although positive affirmation of the American representative democratic system was probable. But Lewis conceives of democratic form, apparently, as not the first and sufficient cause of labor advance and solution of our economic and social problems. He proposes that democracy is rather dependent upon the solution of our problems, so that the other troubles hold the primary rôle: "We can continue to escape the misfortunes which have overtaken the rest of the world only if we set our own house in order. . . . The nation's No. 1 problem is work for its population. The displacement and economic exile of 25 percent of our adult population constitutes a threat to the stability of the nation. . . ."

### *Cure for Political Blues*

ANYONE depressed by the turn which world affairs are taking is recommended to read "The Wages of Biological Sin" by Dr. Ernest Hooton in the October *Atlantic Monthly*. Dr. Hooton is a well-known anthropologist, with his own very special angle upon his kind; and in the course of his researches he has come to certain conclusions regarding human organisms and tendencies which are so sweepingly unfavorable that they make mere external worries about war seem almost irrelevant. If Dr. Hooton is right, or even half right, our trouble is not that we live in an unstable period of human history, but that we were born into the human race. First of all, evolution has done badly by us in every department of our make-up. Our skeleton is an indifferent adaptation, tilted upright with results Dr. Hooton very much deplures. Our muscles are nothing to brag about compared to those of apes (as the late Arthur Brisbane used also to say); the less said about our alimentary, circulatory and nervous systems the better; while our ductless glands are "altogether too complex and delicate" to suit Dr. Hooton's notions of what ductless glands should be.

To cap all of this, we behave (unless we are savages) in a way destined to weaken ourselves further. We go to school, which is bad for the eyes and spine, we use our right hand too much, we wear shoes, ride in automobiles and eat manufactured foods. We think too little ("cerebral dry rot") or too much, which makes us neurotics. Worst of all (by this time Dr. Hooton has worked himself up to saying what he has really been driving at all along) we steadfastly forget the "terribly vital fact" that "the mind of man and his social behavior are essentially functions of his animal organism." We persistently believe we possess immortal souls; uphold the sanctity of



human life above "the value of that life itself"; are too willing to believe that it is "underprivilege which makes the underdog"; and in general give ourselves over to the saving of "debilitated organisms," which produce fodder for fanatical or lunatic leaders and lower the quality of the human stock. Thus, with a plea for what looks like eugenics, Dr. Hooton makes an end. It is not for us to temper his observations or untangle his categories for him, or to ask (as regards the second half of his argument) why an anthropologist refuses to learn from *anthropos*. We merely wonder why, on his own showing, he bothers with the creature at all. And (to simplify the sentence we came in on) we recommend his paper as a fine imaginative exercise in trouble guaranteed to take our minds off the present for a bit.

#### *Four Years of FSA in Missouri*

HISTORY may show that of all the agencies of the Roosevelt régime the little-publicized Farm Security Administration accomplished most for the common weal. Its achievements are not of the spectacular type; they are of the steady, long-range variety. In Missouri,

for example, the FSA has been assisting 20,549 farm families (7 per cent of the state's total farm families) in the past 4 years. These were people who because of the depression, poor management, poor land, landlord-tenant difficulties, floods or drought were completely unable to make a go of things. Rehabilitation comprised modest loans for seed, livestock and equipment plus expert advice in home and farm management. About 21 percent of the \$12,994,271 FSA loans in Missouri has already been repaid. As a result of a "live at home" program, 12,700 Missouri families had increased the average amount of fruits and vegetables put up for home consumption by 169 quarts by the end of last year. They also produced an average of 285 pounds more meat and 383 gallons more milk per family than was produced before the FSA program went into effect. It is heartening to consider the gains in health alone. The Missouri FSA report of Stephen P. Hughes concludes with this significant phrase "We have made some progress and the families themselves have made much more."

#### *Education and Democracy*

THE SURVEY GRAPHIC has issued its second "calling America" number, "Schools, the challenge of democracy to education."

It is an exceptionally interesting piece of journalism, and one which repays study for the light it casts upon the magnitude of the educational problem. There is a particularly good section on what is wrong with the teacher, with

William Allan Neilson as star critic. The Hutchinsites get their innings, too, though the Deweyites are in the majority. There is absolutely nothing in all the articles and captions and briefer comments about religion. No Catholic educator plays any part in the symposium. One wonders why. And not a single writer of them all really seems to appreciate the tremendous magnitude of the task America is trying to accomplish. Every hundred Americans support one school teacher. That in itself is an overwhelming fact. In the light of that fact only can we discuss teachers' salaries and teachers' abilities. Yet not once does any one of the authors of this symposium honestly come to grips with that fact. Is it possible that we have been cutting our educational suit without examining the cloth we have at our disposal? We are committed to offering every citizen a sound education. Could we do the job better if we approached it from the point of view of the tools we have at hand, rather than with the indefinite and infinite effort to fill every vocational demand and follow every professional fashion? That might mean simplification in place of our traditional amplification, and more quality for unnecessary quantity.

#### *Helping Farmers and City Kids*

ONE OF THE thorniest of our problems has to do with milk. Time and again the big distributors in various localities are prosecuted before the courts, and even when the decision is in their favor, the suspicions of the public will not down. The spread between what the farmer receives and the consumer has to pay means that something must be wrong. This suspicion is often heightened by the fact that the dairy distributors exercise virtual monopolies in various cities. In Chicago last July Judge Woodward rejected monopoly charges against 14 corporations and 43 individuals, among them city board of health officials and officers of the Pure Milk Association, the farmers' cooperative. But his decision was followed by the inauguration of federal supervision of the Chicago milk market six weeks later. The latest development there is to use surplus milk for relief purposes, a project affecting 250,000 needy families. These milk recipients will get milk delivered at the door at 5c a quart, or they can get it for 4c a quart at their local relief station. In either case the farmer will receive 3c a quart for his milk. This should be compared with the 3.8c he receives for fluid milk during the season of highest prices according to the Chicago marketing agreement and the 2.3c received for lowest grade, or condensery, milk. The Chicago scheme should be one more step toward the solution of the problem of want in the midst of plenty.

# Youth Hostel Holiday

An inexpensive way of taking a vacation  
that should prove increasingly popular.

By Euphemia Van Rensselaer Wyatt

OUR BICYCLES were in the baggage car; we were speeding tranquilly on the Jersey Central towards a small hamlet in Pennsylvania called Leesport. In our pockets were our membership cards for the AYH—American Youth Hostel. What lay before us was unknown, and it was all of fifteen years since I had last fallen off a bicycle.

It came about from the boys needing a holiday. We own no car and walking trips, once suggested, remained nebulous. Then one day someone said, "What about bicycles?" and the thing was settled. Bicycles led to Youth Hostels—was there an age limit?—and soon we were deep in literature and motor maps, which latter are singularly unhelpful. Pennsylvania was selected as being nearer than New England and more exciting than New Jersey and our ultimate course was checked between Reading and the Delaware Water Gap. AYH rules require for equipment a sheet stitched as a bag with a flap left for a pillow; a towel, plates, mugs and cutlery. My son offered to carry for me a little bag which held my sheet, a dress, shoes, lingerie and toilet articles. He also carried the towels and camping utensils. On my handle bars were my purse, my jacket, a wicker bag with plenty of paper napkins, a psalter, a bottle of liniment and Borrowe's "Bible in Spain." We counted on good weather.

We could have ridden on the rails to Hamburg where we were to find our first hostel but we decided upon a little preliminary exercise. By the map it was only a lowly eight miles, but when we arrived at Leesport at one o'clock we discovered the eight miles were along the big turnpike. A detour seemed in order and, having added beer to our sandwiches, we set off into the rolling uplands of eastern Pennsylvania. As we passed the last cottage in Leesport we heard the radio call out, "War declared by Poland."

The country we had chosen turned out to be so thoroughly under cultivation that trees were at a minimum. It was a warm day and the sun was shining bravely. When woods appeared in the distance, our road would make the most fantastic turns to avoid them. But at last we were able to lie on our backs on the shady side of a hill looking up into the bluest of skies and relish all the delights of the wayfarer. After lunch the road

got more out of hand. Its course was full of vagaries. Just as it seemed settling down to a shaded run along a brook, I shouted to a farmer ploughing on a hillside.

"Hamburg? Golly no! You folks is goin' to Pottstown. But you don't need to go back—come up over the hill. . . ."

We toiled up over the hill, but even then we were glad we had chosen a hilly country for bicycling. To a novice nothing is more restful than a little walk and for every hill you walk up, you have a coast down. This I say dispassionately, as I am a mortal coward about coasting. It has led to my severest downfalls in the past and my deepest scars. Now I coast down no hill whose bottom is problematical. My borrowed bicycle also had coaster brakes, and they have always been my undoing, as somewhere in the middle of some precipitous declivity, logic fights empirical knowledge and subconsciously I decide that two feet must brake better than one. On the present occasion I had mastered my memories and was sailing down the hill with swaggering bravado when, just as I was slowing up, a dog ran out and bit me. It was not a severe bite, but that is only because the dog got my shoe in his mouth instead of my ankle. In any case I fell off instantly. I must say that no one was sorrier than the dog. He had meant it all in good fun, but had made a slight miscalculation. He hung his head and licked my hand and promised to be more careful.

By this time we felt we should be on the lookout for the hostel; our only clue to its whereabouts being its location on Route 3 of rural free delivery. We were then on Route 2 and no one had ever heard of the AYH or of a farmer named L—. We were advised to inquire at the Hamburg post office. . . .

"It's the third house after this one when you get up the hill, and I bet you wish it was nearer." We did for the hill was close to perpendicular. But half-way up we passed a triangle with AYH. They seemed magic letters. We must have had at least sixteen miles to our credit when we rolled into a tiny farmhouse cuddled under the green side of the Appalachians. Two small boys in overalls and some chickens were in the dusty dooryard. A shout arose for "Mama." She was a buxom brunette who greeted us warmly and shouted for



"Papa." No, there was no tub of any kind but plenty of milk and eggs and she and Papa would take us down to the hostel camp where there was also "wasser." Very wearily, for my part, we walked across the barnyard, across a pasture, down a woodlot and into the dark recesses of a pine-wood where Papa had built a bungalow. Down one side of it was a double tier of three immense double bunks with straw mattresses and pillows. There was also a long table with benches, an oil stove with some cooking utensils and a sideboard with a mirror. But it was spotlessly clean and there were flowers in the window boxes. Cheerful Frau L. said it was too "ängstlich" for me to return to the farmhouse for supper, my son would carry down the provisions. But my one idea was to find any available water, which proved to be a running spring further down in the pinewoods. I had just light enough to negotiate a delightful icy bath standing on one foot on a stone and it renewed me—almost. B. fetched the milk and visited the spring with a lantern, but in looking over the hostellers' register we were rather glad our baths were safely taken as some one had printed "Watch Your Step" over the graphic sketch of a coiled rattlesnake with "One Less Now" beneath it. . . .

Eight o'clock next morning came very quickly and after plenty of good cold spring water we carried our belongings up to the farmhouse. Frau L. offered us her kitchen for breakfast with rich cream for the coffee and her bill, which included the hosteling fee of 25 cents a night with 5 cents for fuel, was \$1.27.

Mrs. L. had only five years ago come from Germany, where she had worked in a department store, but she loved farming and America. Mr. L. had been a citizen since the Cleveland administration. He was a great ox of a man with insatiable industry. A carpenter and builder, he had worked his way over most of America and had visited the capitals of Europe. His farming he learned in Wisconsin but for his second marriage he had chosen very carefully this small farm where he was shielded from northeasterly storms by the mountains. Already he was getting the run-down land into good condition and had built himself a cellar, a chicken house, the camp, a fine spring house and was planning a dam for a swimming pond. And wasn't he happy to be out of Germany!

The ride to the next hostel at Lochlands was a very easy one. Sixteen miles over quiet back roads through a rolling prosperous country; stone houses; red barns with dramatic murals of large quadrupeds in action and charms against the hexen; towering Lutheran churches on hilltops with their church yards. We had lunch with excellent beer in a clean German tavern and reached East Tri-poli a little later. It was only a mile from East Tri-poli to the hostel. This was a square

brick farmhouse with solid paneled shutters behind a picket fence under some maples. The small cabin used for the hostellers was obviously the settlers' old log cabin, plastered over and with the fireplace turned into a cupboard. There were two cots—with springs—for the boys and a lean-to kitchen, but, what was better, in another outhouse was a stranded enamel tub that could be filled up from the well with buckets.

Night had fallen when two girl hostellers appeared on bicycles. They had ridden forty miles from Stroudsburg but were as fresh as daisies. As we had drunk up all the milk, Bert ran them into "town" for dinner. Bert had been reading law when the family farm became vacant and for the past two years he had been raising potatoes scientifically. He said his health was much improved but not his fortune. Although he had the ideal gravelly soil for potatoes, the land was old, the pests were many and the need for spraying continuous. His great, great, great grandfather had pushed over into Pennsylvania from New Jersey but would never have survived the first winter, he'd heard, if it hadn't been for the Indians. By the next year, they had a clearing and plenty of mush for the winter; his great grandfather had built the present house with home-made bricks "but," added Bert with true agricultural pessimism, "every building on a farm is just an added liability." He mentioned one farmer nearby who, as a young man, had inherited \$50,000 in cash and after forty years' hard work still had his \$50,000, but frozen into buildings. And yet Bert was planning to buy back fifty more acres of the old farm! That night I slept in the front bedroom of the brick house where black walnut had displaced the original maple and corded bedsteads.

Breakfast next morning with rashers of bacon and eggs and a bill of \$1.75 for the three of us, which did not include fifty cents we spent on steak and bacon. Bert had been so eloquent about the high nutritive value of potatoes—particularly Pennsylvania potatoes—and the blaggard anti-potato-starch propaganda of California fruit growers, that I felt my muscular effort must be increased by the tubers I had eaten for supper. Bert's directions for reaching Kunkletown were explicit as to how we might save six miles by taking a dirt road for Lehigh Gap. That dirt road was our undoing. It was a nice little road and even when it began to curve upward we were unsuspecting, knowing that we had to reach the next valley and thinking we were taking a short cut to the gap. The little road's grade increased sharply and we dismounted to push our bicycles. We had climbed so high when we met a lane that ran down again that we couldn't bear to discount so much effort. The grade became steeper, the Appalachians loomed above us. Crossing them high up on the skyline was a high tension line.

"I wonder where the gap can be?"

"Gap nothing," returned E., "we're climbing up to those wires." We just laughed at him.

Towards midday we reached a spring and a clearing where there was a picnic in full swing. "The mountain isn't very much higher," sang out one of the revelers. Soon after this B. charitably attached my bicycle to his to help me. We did eventually reach the summit of the Appalachians and passed by the high tension wires. It began to rain gently. The boys mounted their machines—they had comforting hand brakes—and started coasting. I clung to my bicycle which plunged forward like a colt and stumbled down over the sharpest stones ever encountered. Far, far below was a little toy village. Sometimes the boys bounced off the stones for a rest, and then I caught up with them. On an extra steep place B even came back to help me. But the grade was so sharp that soon the valley began to lose perspective and at last even I could coast without too many heart beats. . . . We had only one more range of hills to climb before the Kunkletown valley.

Five little girls in Sunday best and two little boys on bicycles climbed that hill with me. It was a very long hot hill but the little girls were friendly and the little boys circled round us. At the top, where we parted, began a two-mile coast, gracefully graded. We skimmed by a country club, a great stone church and at last we were told we had only eight straight miles ahead of us. It was a pleasant easy road down a winding valley, but in spite of potatoes, my legs remembered they had been up and down a mountain and at length I suggested to B he ride ahead to the hostel. Then appeared the Good Samaritan in the shape of a Pennsylvania Dutch farmer. "How far to Kunkletown?" said I.

"Two miles," said he, "but what about some cider? Come in and taste our new barrel."

One of his children crawled in under the house and passed out glass after glass of what seemed pure nectar. It had been another good hot day. From that point on the valley grew distinctly prettier. In the distance we could see on a knoll the white houses of Kunkletown and rejoiced to know that the hostel was this side of it. The welcome AYH marked a lane that shot down towards the river. Passing through an ample farmyard where a herd of cows were gathered under the lee of a huge red barn with rows of fat pigs beyond them, we came upon a square stone house set in the neatest of little gardens. Below the house lay fallow fields to the river and beyond rose the wooded slopes of our Appalachians. No sight could have been more rewarding.

Kunkletown hostel farm is run by two women, Pennsylvania Dutch, a mother and daughter. There is also the hired man and the son-in-law, and the elder brother, who is postman, helps be-

tween his morning and evening deliveries. That morning, the women had fed all the livestock. It is pleasant when one hears of the woes of farming to remember Kunkletown, the rich fields, trim garden and fat animals and recall Johnny and the postman tucking away a great breakfast of fricasseed chicken, cake, all manner of sweet bread, jam and milk and eggs. . . .

As is usual with last rides, that day's was by far the most delightful. After the Kunkletown valley, we entered another even more charming where I loaded myself with yellow peaches and the boys caught up with me at the Cherry Vale hostel. With all the hostellers we had met, this seemed to be most popular. The hostel is an ancient Indian trading post on a trout stream that races down the side of the Appalachian ridge. Around the large fireplace is a lounge with easy chairs and behind, a business-like looking commissary. Upstairs are two dormitories, male and female. Between the two dormitories is a room for the good doctor who is housemaster. Farther up the trout stream is a pavilion for cooking and mess hall and showers for boys and girls. The property has been in the doctor's family since the days of the covered wagons and includes, besides his home farm, fine game preserves and slopes for skiing. Log cabins nearer the farm take care of an overflow. There were a number of hostellers present of both sexes—mostly "hikers"—and two dogs. One was a vicious young Alaskan who curled back his lip and showed his teeth at a sedate shepherd lady named Fillette whom I was invited to address in French. As the doctor doesn't encourage canine hostellers, the Alaskan had been sent to a cabin and Fillette and her mistress relegated to a tent.

After viewing the friendly doctor's collection of shaving mugs, his original cash register and phonograph with wax disks, we stored provisions for lunch at his commissary. Late that afternoon when we reached the D., L. and W. station at the Delaware Water Gap, we found most of the hostellers assembled on the platform. But a problem presented itself with the dogs as holiday specials rarely have baggage cars. We saw the cross Alaskan expelled from the forward end of one train and then, as it passed us, saw to our delight Fillette wagging her tail on the rear platform. It takes a French lady to get places. Our bicycles also did us a good turn, as we watched four crowded excursion trains steam by and then boarded the Buffalo flyer that was flagged for us because it had an express car. We loaded the bicycles on a taxi at the Twenty-third Street Ferry. . . . The four days' holiday with its plethora of fresh air and fresh food had cost each of us, including \$2 for membership fee in the AYH and \$5 for railroad fares—\$3.73. And isn't it nice of the AYH not to have an age limit, as they have in France, for hostellers!

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# Which Way, Democracy?

Some fundamental notions on how reform works; the nature of labor, of property.\*

By Wilfrid Parsons, S.J.

**A**N ETERNAL fallacy of the human mind seems to be that the problems of society can be conquered by utopian solutions. The idea that just around the corner, or at least over the next two hills or so, is a millennium in which all men will be good, all the forces of nature will be brought under control and everybody will be made healthy, wealthy and wise, seems never to be eradicated from our imaginations, no matter how bitter the disillusionments of the past may be.

This same kind of instinct to find some simple solution for our troubles is constantly breaking out in other forms than that of looking for it in democracy, or the suppression of Jesuit, Jew or Freemason, or whatnot. The same type of mentality is the one which is seduced by the promises of communism or of fascism. The idea is that if we once introduce some new form of society, some new social gadget, the whole face of the world will be changed and everything will be all right.

A glance at the fads of the past few years should cure us of this disease. There was a time when all the best minds saw in Freudianism and psychoanalysis the whole cure of all individual and social ills.

Technocracy was once, for a hectic time, a name to conjure with, and many bright people, now ashamed to admit it, were its fervent disciples.

It was not very long ago that the single tax was the revolution which for many minds would prove to be the one solution of all injustice. To somewhat the same type of mind monetary reform has the same attraction.

To be entirely frank and candid, I may say the same thing of the Papal program of occupational groups. If we once come to offer it as the panacea, we shall fall into the same grotesque errors as the others. It would be the same fallacy that a mechanical solution will create better social conditions of itself and without anything further than its mere introduction. I have myself heard Catholics who have talked this way. Yet the plain fact is that no social system, no matter how perfect, will of itself, apart from the men who operate it, bring about the millennium or anything near it. This goes for the system of the Encyclicals as well

as for all others. Anything else is mere superstition, and superstition has no place in social science.

The plain truth, so often overlooked by the determinists, is that what happens in human society happens as a result of the free choice of human wills. Marx thought that capitalism would quickly reach such a point of concentration in his day that the revolution would necessarily come. He foretold that the world would quickly be apportioned between the few owners of wealth and the very many workers for them; that this condition would of itself prove unbearable and that men must rebel against it. He foretold the revolution; he did not think it necessary to do anything else than to be sure of the revolutionary situation when it came, and to exploit it. The situation never came, because his law turned out to be a fallacy. The world did not divide up into wealthy men and proletarians, but a large and ever-growing middle class persisted in existing, and when the time came, that class made the revolution, not the proletariat. In other words, his philosophy forbade him and his followers to see the one plain and certain fact, and that was the operation of free wills in society.

Yet, as I said, this same philosophy has permeated many minds, even among Catholics and other believers. We may not go to the fantastic limits of the Marxian dialectic, and few of us have ever attempted the rôle of prophets who must be right. But we are all more or less allured by the fiction that we have only to create such or such a condition in society for all the evils of society to be healed, as if that condition of itself would perform some untold magic among us.

There is no conceivable rearrangement of social forces that can do this for us. All we can do is to offer the best conditions under which rightly disposed human wills can work, and in which we can reduce as far as possible the chances for fraud and greed. From this point of view, reform or reconstruction of the social order has a real meaning. There are certainly forms of society in which fraud and greed have greater chances to pullulate, and certainly capitalistic democracy allied with individualistic liberalism is one of them. On the other hand, collectivism, or the opposite extreme of individualism, would certainly destroy human liberties. The great justification of the system of

\* Taken from a chapter of Father Parsons's book, "Which Way, Democracy?" to be published by Macmillan.

occupational groups, with its guild philosophy, is precisely that it avoids the extremes of individualism and socialism, or rather reconciles within itself whatever is true in both of those theses, by embracing at the same time the individual and the social aspects of man's existence.

Meanwhile, therefore, it is a reform of man himself that must accompany the reform of institutions. I said "accompany" rather than "precede," for it would be just as hopeless to have our institutions reformed without the reform of men, as to have men reformed without any institution in which their newly gained good will might operate. Hence the debate as to which should precede the other simply has no meaning.

This reform of men can remain only a nebulous wish, unless we examine closely into just what it should mean in practice. It is all very well to say that men should be honest, should love their fellow men, should work for the common good . . . and similar generalities. But just what does all that mean in our modern society?

I have expressed my belief that democracy cannot really survive unless it retains or returns to the religious affirmation on which it is based. I do not mean to say that I think it cannot survive unless it accepts the whole religious position on which I stand myself with other Catholics, though I do believe that religious unity would be the greatest boon that could befall us. What I mean is that the essential belief in man's dignity as a creature of God, with a supernatural last end of eternal felicity, is the minimum on which social peace and prosperity can be founded. This persuasion of the supreme value of human personality, and of the immediate corollary of the natural law which must protect man from the encroachments of authority and exploitation by wealth, is the sole hope of society.

#### *The nature of labor*

Closely allied with this is another persuasion which runs counter to the prevailing materialism. In the pursuit of wealth that has accompanied and degraded one of the happier aspects of our capitalist democracy, namely, the notion that all men have an equal right to the chances of advancing their fortunes, we find a profound evil that is being greatly aggravated in our times. Very close to the idea of the dignity of man lies the idea of the dignity of labor. Both of them are flouted in these days. Labor has become something to escape from, not something to honor and cherish. The mirage of leisure and wealth has been responsible for much suffering and also much dishonesty.

In a sense, this mirage has justified itself as akin to reality in the recent past. Our expanding economy, the vacuum which it constantly created in the social classes just above, and the constant inflow beneath of new workers from abroad, gave a

semblance of reason to the dream of a society in which all the lower sections would be moving constantly upward, because their place would be instantly taken by others less favored. But our economy has ceased to expand, perhaps permanently; the vacuum has become a plethora; and we have of our own accord stopped the flow of immigration.

The result of this is that from now on the laboring class is doomed, as the world would now have it, to remain the laboring class, as in Europe. The misfortune is that we are not spiritually prepared for this catastrophe. The obstacles to advance in social standing have become insuperable, and we have the spectacle of a once aspiring force now dammed down into immobility. To speak in human terms, we have millions of families which will indefinitely remain in the working class, and those same families looking on that fate as nothing less than a disaster and an injustice. What was once an inspiration for progress and prosperity has become a dull menace of revolution or of despair.

As long as we look on being a laborer as being something inferior in the human scale, so long will this unfortunate condition prevail. We can be saved from it and its dire consequences only by a revolution of spirit. The communist is meeting it by proclaiming that the destiny of all men is to be workers, and by a movement to reduce all men to that state. But we look in vain in communist literature for anything that will make men like it. The machine is man's destiny, and he may as well be resigned to it. In this there is nothing except to see man as an animal, whose sole function is the production of material goods.

The Christian concept of labor is far nobler. The highest type of Christian humanity is Christ Himself, a worker with His hands, the son of a worker, the friend and associate of workers. By choosing the vocation of a carpenter, He dignified manual labor for all time. The keenest outrage committed against the worker in our times has been the materialist philosophy of the pursuit of wealth and station as the highest and most honorable pursuit that a man can follow.

This earth and all that is in it are truly loved by Christ, "in whom, and through whom, and for whom" it was made, as Saint Paul reminds us. The production out of the earth of all its possible wealth, the adornment of it by all possible ingenuity, the discovery of all its secrets and their fullest exploitation, all have something sacred about them in this cosmic concept of Christ and the union of the faithful soul with Him. The selfish possession of all this wealth is a degradation of it. But the work of man's hands to produce that wealth has a nobility that nothing can rob him of, if he only looks on it as it really is, and not as animal greed and self-indulgence would regard it.

One group in the United States that has grasped this Christian philosophy of labor to the fullest is

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the movement called the *Catholic Worker*, with its newspaper of the same name. Under its leaders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, it has come to be a practical realization of the necessity of changing the degrading materialism which has gripped many of our workers. "All of our fellow-workers," it says in a recent number of the *Catholic Worker* (a periodical with over 100,000 circulation), "all of our fellow-workers in our twenty-one branches throughout the country have pledged themselves to voluntary poverty and manual labor. They will take less so that others may have more. They are trying to reach the poverty of the stable in which Christ was born." Thus by example and organization they are trying to bring to the labor world a living picture of what it is called by its Creator to become.

The communist has sneered at such a movement in the past. To him this religious concept is some kind of opium designed to deaden the worker to the bitterness of his chains. But the communist does two contradictory things: he condemns all men to the chains of manual labor and he works to make men hate them. To the communist, manual labor is at the same time the necessary ultimate condition of all men—he glories in that; and, for the purposes of the class struggle, it is also a badge of infamy. The salvation of mankind cannot come from such inherent contradictions as that. This salvation can come only when all workers have attained to the glory and nobility of the Worker, Christ.

#### *The nature of property*

At the same time, Christianity brings also a more ennobling concept of private property. This is that all things on this earth are ultimately owned by God, the Creator, and that the man who temporarily possesses them has only a secondary right to them, because he holds them only as trustee, to use them for the good not of himself only, but for the good of all mankind. Since God is the only true owner of all the wealth of the world, even of that wealth which man has himself created, no man has the right to arrogate the exclusive use of it to himself alone. If a man owns anything at all, he owns it for the common interest, and not at all for his sole personal utility. This is the Christian concept of property.\*

The current theory of property, even under capitalist democracy, is that the state is the ultimate owner, and can take any part of it by "right of eminent domain." Since, according to the almost universal legal theory, the state is the source of all rights, which are merely granted by it to their present possessors, both the right of property and also the actual possession of goods may be taken away from them. (Here, incidentally, is where present-day capitalism, as Marx saw very

well, is the preparation for and the necessary fore-runner of communism.) Hence, as soon as you have admitted that the right of private property, like all other rights, reposes ultimately in the state, which merely grants it to its present possessor, then you have opened the way to take away from all men the last bulwark of their personal freedom and have turned them into slaves of the state. And even if you hold that the private ownership of things is absolute, but yet not subject to the dominion of God, then you cannot admit that the holder of it has any duties as regards it to his fellow-men.

As between these three concepts: the capitalist, that the state is the ultimate owner; the communist, that the collectivity is the rightful owner; and the Christian, that God is the Ultimate Owner, there is no question that the last is infinitely the most ennobling, both for the individual and for society. Only the Christian concept can truly establish man in a true relation to the visible world and at the same time make that relation valuable for society. Only when the possessor of goods is persuaded that he is only the trustee of the goods that he owns can he truly use them for his own personal salvation and that of all other men.

An immediate corollary of this traditional Christian teaching is that a man is bound under serious obligation to share with others the "superfluity of his goods." This seems to me to be an obligation in justice, and not only in charity, as some have held. Whatever a man has, the teaching runs, over and above what he needs to keep himself and his family in their relative state of life, he is bound in conscience to give to others.

At the same time, the Church stands out today as the staunchest defender of the right of private property. Its grounds for taking this stand are that the right is inherent in human nature and is in no way a grant from society, as the current legal and political teaching in this country has it. It is thus based on no hypothesis, namely that society wishes to grant this right, but on the fact that the right precedes society itself.

Now if this stand is true, then it follows that property is for all, not for some, and therefore a society which tends more and more to restrict property to fewer and fewer, as our capitalist society does, has something fundamentally vicious about it. This is why Leo XIII, and Pius XI after him, vigorously advocated the position that the principal policy of government must be a wider distribution of property throughout society. The distributists in England, founded by Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton, are an organized group agitating for this program, with an organ, formerly called *G.K.'s Weekly*, now simply the *Weekly Review*. Their policy is that if private property is for some, it is for everybody.

"Each class," says Pius XI, "must receive its due share, and the distribution of created goods must

\* Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, II IIae qu. LXV, art. 2.

be brought into conformity with the demands of the common good and social justice, for every sincere observer is conscious that the vast differences between the few who hold excessive wealth and the many who live in destitution constitute a grave evil in modern society." Property owned privately is defended, and rightly, on the ground that it constitutes the last bulwark of personal liberty. It is obvious that a society in which the vast majority own nothing as their own except a few personal chattels is one in which the ideal, and the fact, of human liberty are very near to perishing. That is why the Popes have always insisted that private property must be distributed as widely as possible if the dignity of the human personality is to be preserved.

The mission of the Church is neither economic nor political, nor has it any other secular function. Its mission is to teach and to save, and to do that by supernatural means, not natural. It is the channel of truth and of grace. It must keep before men always the ideal of justice and charity in their social relations. It must show them that they are all brothers in Christ Jesus, and that it is their duty, not the Church's, to bring about the abolition of injustice and the reign of charity. At the same time, it will show them truths concerning man, and society, and God, that must animate any sound reconstruction of the social order. When it departs from that into the manipulation of political forces, it has thrown away its strongest weapon, which is its influence on the souls of men.

## Dirge for Dunfermline

Sir David Hunter-Blair was a lovable prelate of strong character and idiosyncrasy.

By Richard Flower, O.S.B.

WHEN BROWNING'S Bishop ordered his own tomb, his desire was to be buried close enough to his cathedral altar to enable him to

... hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,  
And see God made and eaten all day long,  
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste  
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!

So closely interwoven were the spiritual and the physical strands in that typical medieval prelate. Akin to the poet's Bishop was our own Abbot Oswald, known to his readers as Nestor and to a great host of others as The Right Reverend Sir David Oswald Hunter-Blair, Bart., O.S.B., Titular Abbot of Dunfermline and one-time Abbot of Fort Augustus, Scotland; known also to many a British public school boy as Bunter. He himself retained something of the school boy; with youth he was always on easy footing, full of banter and humor, bursting with cultivated chatter and fascinating reminiscences and sending them into screams of laughter. His rotund figure, rubicund cheeks, blue eyes: the trappings of his dignity—cross and ring and buckled shoes; his amusing stories about every celebrity of the last hundred years; his gusto for good food and drink, with an equal gusto for Mozart and Beethoven; at home in the classics as any Oxonian would be, and astonishingly clever moreover in a half-dozen modern tongues; exulting in the pageantry of the literary and historical past, and similarly exultant over the

splendid detail of his pontifical Mass; versatile with tongue and pen; amiable, amusing, on occasion rude and at moments bringing the whole entourage running to assuage some petulant outburst; always working at letters, articles, or, latterly, at the daily commitment of his life to his diary—the *legenda aurea* which one was permitted at times to examine and admire; rarely given to sadness, loving all men, but particularly aware of his class and proud of the institutions which had formed him; widely traveled, indeed sometimes banteringly termed the Abbot from Fort Augustus (when I last saw him four years ago, he was then, at the age of eighty-two, contemplating visiting the English Benedictine foundations in the United States, or else flying to Vienna to hear the opera; a rich friend had given him a birthday cheque); widely traveled, but somehow always in a monastery, interested in his own familia, loving the habit, passionately loyal to Holy Church; simple, humble, learned; fat, jovial, witty; a rarely gifted medieval abbot; Etonian, Oxonian, papal chamberlain, baronet, monk, prelate, and a lover of all the best of two worlds. Such was Dunfermline. Let the dirge be sung, with the tapers alight and the choir full-voiced; for a rare churchman has passed down the cloisters and in at the door of death's chapter house. *Dirige, Domine!*

Browning's Bishop lay beneath alabaster; Abbot Oswald lies under the greensward, marked by a simple cross, beside the waters of Loch Ness,



almost in the shadow of the Mary Tower of his beloved Abbey, where hourly the bells chime

Sancte Pater, Benedicte,  
Intercede pro nobis.

### *His life*

David Hunter-Blair was born in 1853 at Dunskey Castle, Ayrshire, of Scottish Presbyterian stock, and grew up in an atmosphere of sheltered refinement and county society. At nine he was sent away to school at May Place in Malvern to prepare for Eton, where he entered in the summer half of 1865. There, despite the ineffectualness of the school chapel and the tutorial system, he unconsciously inhaled the "aura of Catholicism which still hung faintly about the venerable walls and cloisters and King Henry's great chapel." Biography and history began a subtle change in his judgments, and the stirring conversion in 1868 of the young Marquess of Bute, followed in 1869 by that of his "favorite uncle," Colonel David Hunter-Blair, had a marked effect on the impressionable Etonian. Leaving Eton in 1870 young Hunter-Blair spent a year with a tutor in the West Riding of Yorkshire; then, after an autumn of continental travel, he went into residence in January, 1872, at Magdalen, "the Benjamin of the College." His Oxford days were rich in associations. Charmed names emerge from his memoirs: Jowett ("seeing him taking a Platonic ramble arm-in-arm with George Eliot round Magdalen walks"), Pusey, Prince Leopold (with whom he played the piano on autumn afternoons), Dean Liddell, Liddon, King, Bright, Max Müller, John Ruskin. He haunted the High Church of St. Barnabas, but his religion did not prevent him from becoming a Mason. There are strains of Mozart and plain chant all through his undergraduate life: the gay and the grave. The Lent of 1875 found him on a journey to Rome, after a musical feast in Leipsic. "I wanted to see Catholicism for myself." It was on Maundy Thursday, March 25, that he was received into the One Fold, by Father Edward Douglas. Magdalen would not credit the *Times* report: called it a "most infernal lie"; even the Vicar of St. Barnabas used strong language from the pulpit. The young convert must have chuckled at the wrath of dons and deans.

To trace the life of Hunter-Blair would lead one into many of the fair places of earth, for he went everywhere and knew everyone worth knowing. The bare facts of his career are given succinctly enough in any *Who's Who*. Eton; Oxford; Captain of Ayreshire Militia, 1876; entered the Benedictine Order, 1878; ordained, 1886; rector of the Abbey School, Fort Augustus, 1890-1895; succeeded his father as fifth baronet, 1896; three years of educational and religious work for the Benedictine Order in Brazil, followed by nine years as Master of Hunter-Blair's Hall in Oxford;

superior, Prior (1912-1913) and Abbot (1913-1918) of Fort Augustus; named Titular Abbot of Abingdon, 1918, and of Dunfermline, 1921. One wonders how he found time to study and to write—not only long personal letters, but books. It is certain that he was never idle and that his literary activity took on ample dimensions from the moment—"the great turning-point" of his life—that he became a Benedictine monk. The remainder of his long life might be termed an *opus benedictinum*—*largo, andante, scherzo, rallentando*; for underneath all his journeys to castle and to convent, to Oxford, Rome and Brazil, in and out of country house and club, he was the monk; whether papal chamberlain, Oxford Master, Abbot or Baronet, he was essentially and avowedly a son of Saint Benedict. He wove all things into one fine witness for Catholic truth. One of the choicest documents he has left us is his diary, some twenty-five volumes of neat long-hand accounts of his daily doings, over a period of thirty or more years. It was a treat to peep into them, for they were illustrated with photographs of persons and places. From these he was able to draw out the seven or eight books of reminiscences for which he is justly famous. His edition of the "Rule of Saint Benedict" has gone into three editions. Then, years ago, he translated and edited the four volumes of Canon Bellesheim's German "History of the Catholic Church in Scotland." Add to these the composition of seventy-eight articles for the "Catholic Encyclopedia" and innumerable magazine articles, and you wonder how he managed to be and to do so many things. The fact is he was always busy, and exceedingly methodical.

### *Visiting the Fort*

There still remains the memory of his frequent return visits to Fort Augustus. "Abbot Oswald is coming for a week or so." And that meant the delight of seeing an old friend who would regale the community, the novices in especial, with stories and jokes and who would ply them with endless commissions. Owing to his excessive rotundity he had to be propelled up the stairs; one held one's palm firmly against his back and he would mount the whole flight without a pause. Then, once in the Bishop's Room, he would drop with a thud into an easy chair, sighing: "O my God! here, Brother, fetch me the port." One saw and admired his great ring, his buckled slippers and his array of luggage; hung on his breathless, cultured chatter and the precision with which he drew forth from his well-furnished mind things new and old. His personal belongings would be arranged in the neatest manner; papers and letters were kept in definite drawers; the pince-nez with its black silk ribbon scanned every detail, whilst novices and guest-master ran to do his bidding. One day he had them searching in the moat for an abbatial

ring, flung out by mistake with some orange peelings. When he joined the community in choir he was be-cushioned before and behind and beneath. One day as he knelt down for the *Aperi* before Vespers, the force of his weight sent clashing four misericords in the stalls immediately in front, and he was heard to mutter in an aggrieved tone: "O my God, those novices!" . . . Abbot Oswald always addressed the School on his visits to the Fort and usually also the juniors and novices. Sitting in a chair hoisted onto a table he regaled us once on ghosts, even showing the photograph (!) of one. Latterly he was chief sponsor for the reality of the Loch Ness monster, a strange creature reported from time to time to have been seen in the Scottish lake. He believed it to be a survivor from a species of the Devonian period, several million years ago. . . . Recently I had a letter from him with a clipping of his article, "The Glamour of Glamis Castle," and he had written in pencil at the heading: "I sent a copy of this to Queen Elizabeth (Lord Strathmore's daughter) and had a most kind letter from her." . . . I rarely saw Abbot Oswald except in his habit, but I knew that he annually doffed this to array himself in court dress for the garden party at Balmoral. The monks of Edinburgh Priory said he was like a rosy dumpling, unmistakably impressive but rollickingly funny. . . . He was a social being: he loved being with people. "My life," he wrote, anent his appointment as Prior at the Fort, "whether at Fort Augustus or Oxford or in Brazil, had always been a life in community." Sometimes I have detected a note of loneliness in his conversation, but it quickly shifted to one of buoyant gaiety and charm. One day he let fall his pince-nez and, turning abruptly from his writing, exclaimed: "Fetch me a rule." Hastening to comply, the young monk brought him a measuring-stick, only to be scathed with petulant derision. "The Rule! the Rule of our Holy Father!" One loved these outbursts, for Abbot Oswald bore no malice. Even for his known enemies he had a fair judgment and kindly comment.

For my personal contacts with this prelate of an ancient day I have to declare my lasting gratitude. He taught me no express lessons in spiritual matters, his piety was seldom aired; but he exhaled an understanding of men and events at once so sympathetic and merry, an activity so amazing, and a personableness so delightful that I know his spirit is giving joy to the choirs above. He was heir to honor and wealth. He was called to pomp and position. He passed through them all with a fine appreciation of their good and took his way, steadfastly, to the courts and towers of a city not made with hands. Is he perhaps even now excogitating another Medley of Memories of his long and memorable sojourn on earth? *Requiescat in pace!*

## Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

WHETHER the war in Europe is to continue and spread, or to be ended, at least temporarily, by some patched-up arrangement will become clearer (perhaps) later on this week, when the British answer to Hitler's last speech will be made by Mr. Chamberlain. Meanwhile, only one thing seems quite clear—namely, that the Catholic Church has been dealt a frightful blow which comes as the latest, but probably far from the last, in a series of disasters that have continued uninterruptedly since the first world war and which more and more must result in rapidly and greatly increasing the duties and responsibilities—and, of course, the wonderful opportunities—of the Catholics of the United States to come to the aid of Mother Church.

Consequent upon the Nazi-Communist conquest of Poland, nearly twenty-five million Catholics have become subjects of two régimes both of which have proved beyond any doubt their enmity to Catholicism and their power to persecute all its agencies of education, culture and self-support. But what has happened to the Catholics of Germany and Austria and Czecho-Slovakia will be, of course, mild and tolerant treatment indeed compared to what the Catholics of Poland must expect at the hands of their Nazi and Communist conquerors. When Russia and Germany held Poland in partition in former years, the religious unity of the Poles was the major force in nourishing and maintaining their ceaseless efforts to regain their national and personal liberty. The master-minds of both Nazi-Germany and Communist-Russia well understand that there is something in the Catholic religion mortally opposed to the absolutism of both systems, or any similar system, of secularist totalitarianism. That the full power of the Nazi and Communist régimes will be exerted to nullify or root up all the organizational works of the Church among the Poles must be taken for granted.

Only the resurrection of Poland would suffice to release its surviving Catholic inhabitants. But only the decisive defeat of Germany and Russia combined could lead to the revival of Polish nationality. That event, if possible at all, can now only be expected at the conclusion of a general war which in all human probability would last for years and lead to the devastation of most of Europe and complete its financial and social and cultural ruin. But if the Allies accept Hitler's terms, leaving Hitler still in control of Germany, the Nazi-Communist powers will win the war without fighting it, except in puny Poland, and the rising tide of atheistic secularism may be expected to flow onward to more and more conquests of propaganda and aggression.

In addition to the fate that has befallen the Polish Catholics and the Catholics in greater Germany, we should remember the frightful weakening of the Church in Spain, in spite of Franco's victory, with thousands of priests wiped out and all material resources crippled or

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destroyed. And now in France all the priests except old men and invalids are in the army and navy, and only a few of them as chaplains. And the clergy of England is diminished for spiritual and educational work at home by the demands of military service, though, so far, as chaplains, and not in the fighting forces. Meanwhile, the material resources of the Holy See, as necessary today as in the infant days of the Church, but on a gigantic scale, are drastically reduced in flowing toward Rome from all the countries of Europe.

If the war goes on, thousands of vocations will be snuffed out in blood or disease or starvation. The worldwide mission of the Church is in deadly jeopardy, at a time when its prospects otherwise never were brighter. Moreover the world influence of the Church must inevitably suffer more or less through the effects of the divisions among its children produced by the war. And yet it is clear that only the Church remains as a world-center of reconstruction.

It is now that the wisdom of our American Catholic Church leaders in forming and extending during the years since the world war the national coordination of church societies and movements in the National Catholic Welfare Conference will be most amply and practically justified. That our legitimate leaders, the Bishops, unanimously aided by the clergy as a body, are taking a foremost part in implementing the national determination to keep this country out of participation in any war save one of positively necessary self-defence is evident. Its full recognition will greatly strengthen the influence of the Church in working for our future peace and security whether the war ends now or continues. It is to be confidently hoped that the coming annual meeting of the Bishops will give strengthened direction to the Catholic societies of all sorts which are under the general guidance of the NCWC.

Above all other efforts in which organized American Catholicism seems called upon for increased and coordinated work, the increased support of the Holy See, financially and in giving more workers to the mission fields and for clerical service in countries needing more priests to supply those slain in the revolutions and in the war, takes first place. In addition to that, and of supreme importance for the future of the world, there is the continuance and extension of the Papacy's program of social justice. Neither Communism or Nazism would ever have been embodied in world-shaking mighty force had not the supposedly Christian western world, in Europe and in America, first failed so conspicuously as it did in rendering bare justice to the workers of the world.

It was forgotten that the defrauding of the worker is one of the sins that, as the Church teaches, are capital and for which reparation as well as repentance are necessary if the individuals and societies committing them are to find lasting peace. That American Catholics must take an ever-increasing part in supporting the Church's task of enlightening and instructing the nations of the world whether or not the war continues seems to need no further demonstration than the actual facts of the world situation now supply. But we American Catholics need more than abstract teaching, we need concrete leaders, more dependable than the radio priests of Detroit and Brooklyn.

## Communications

### NEUTRALITY AND PEACE

Elmira, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In your issue for October 6 there appear two communications which, if I expressed my own reaction, I would call pathetic: because the actual situation puts the Catholic conscience in a dilemma from which there seems to be no escape consistent with the principles with which it is informed.

We all want peace. But how to obtain a just and lasting peace? It is certain that the longer the war lasts the more difficult it will become to establish such a peace; the more difficult it will also be to "Stop Stalin," for that will be the question if and when Hitler is stopped by military action. It is also clear that if America keeps out of the war, she can exert more influence in the making of a just and lasting peace. Winston Churchill wants the war to last until the German people are starved into surrender. In the meantime, of course, millions of lives will be sacrificed in the fighting, hate will increase daily and at the end, if the Allies win (which is by no means certain), the hate will extend to the whole German people, some thirty million of whom are our co-religionists, as it did in 1919; for it was not "the Kaiser and Prussian Junkers," but the representatives of the German people who had to sign the Treaty of Versailles, and whose pleading for justice was later spurned in the League of Nations.

The best analysis of the situation and its threatening outcome I have seen is found in a sermon of the Reverend Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, reported in the *Herald Tribune* of October 2. "The last war," he says, "did not settle a single basic problem in international relations. Twenty-five years from now serious minds will be saying the same thing about this war. . . . This war will create more problems than it solves. We are going to face a flood of propaganda to make us feel that here, at last, is a holy crusade." And if the war continues, I believe we are going to succumb to that. If the war lasts until the flowers bloom in the spring, and a million human bodies are rotting along the West Wall, we shall be in it up to the neck. *The New Republic* should know what this propaganda means. Its editor writes on October 4: "If the Allies presently appear to be losing, and if at the same time our people felt that we were doing less than we reasonably could to aid them, the reaction in their favor might easily *compel* a declaration of war." (*Italics inserted.*) *Our people, will compel our people to declare war!*

Therefore I have said the letters of Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Slocum are pathetic. Millions of Catholics are in their boat. But in this mad world we cannot give them effective direction. Before next summer Mr. Dickinson will, if the war continues, be on his way to Europe to kill Germans, or in a concentration camp as a disloyal citizen. And Mr. Slocum will no longer be allowed to speak of neutrality or to thank God for it. There will be a host of orators—the most eloquent among them will be Catholics—denouncing such "slackers" and telling us that

before any individual citizen doubts the justice of a war declared by his country, "the injustice must be as plain as the nose on your face"—as we were told when this country went to war with Spain forty years ago. My bishop at that time (McQuaid, a very able man) frequently said to us: "I have never been able to convince myself that we had any just cause for going to war with Spain."

REV. OWEN B. MCGUIRE.

#### LABOR-CHURCH SURVEY

Chicago, Ill.

**T**O the Editors: Recent developments in the field of labor are both encouraging and to the point. The growth of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists in this country, so that now there are about six chapters in the larger eastern and middle western cities, proves decisively that Catholics at least are becoming encyclical minded. Not only that, but American politics and American labor in general are looking to the just principles laid down by Leo XIII and Pius XI. American newspapers have been quoting the encyclicals in their editorials. The Catholic Church and the Pope are gradually being recognized as more than the spiritual leaders of their people. Recognition of the moral duties of justice and charity in labor and politics under their guidance is becoming evident.

With all this widespread interest in the Church and its social teachings, what better opportunity for Catholics to become the leaders in the desire for a better social order? Men and women with the courage and their Catholic convictions are certain to influence America and American life. No longer are we looked upon as a minority group that is superstitious and whose every action is ruled by Rome. But rather as a group which is seeking the true liberation of man in a new society where love and charity prevail.

In Washington at present, holding the position of Attorney General, is one Frank Murphy. A zealous Catholic, one who has long recognized the rights of labor, he holds the highest position in the United States government that any Catholic has ever achieved. The same can and will be true of all Catholic politicians, business men, farmers and laboring men who live their faith. America is seeking a way out. We Catholics have the route. Under the banner of the divine truths, with the guidance of Christ and the Church, we can lead to the promised land.

A further sign of the importance and the rôle that the Church is playing in labor was the Mass offered at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago on Labor Day. The Mass was offered to Christ the Worker. The significance of this occasion is a mark in the progress of Catholics and American labor. The clergy and the laity are both on the march for a unified labor front. Not to force the issue but with sound social teaching and well trained labor leaders to win to the American labor field a sense of duty, of charity and of justice. Along with this, hundreds of thousands of petitions are being signed and presented to the Holy Father to establish a Feast of Christ the Worker. What better day could be selected for that Feast than our traditional Labor Day? A day when we could remind America and the world of the significance of Christ the

Worker; of the dignity of man; of the importance of the working man in any sound society. A day where unity of purpose, based on love and understanding, would supplant the too dominant idea of class struggle. A day in which all would seek real Christian solidarity.

The fact that Christ was a carpenter, a common workman, and the men around him were common workmen, fishermen, tentmakers, etc., wasn't just an accident. It had a divine significance. It established once and for all the importance in life of men who worked with their hands. Thus workingmen should be proud of their heritage and along with Simon the fisherman and Paul the tentmaker, seek their destiny through Christ the Worker. America needs, Christ wants us. Let us as Catholics show America real Catholicism and the Catholic labor way.

MARTIN PAUL.

#### HENRY GEORGE

Oshkosh, Wis.

**T**O the Editors: Your editorial note in the issue of September 8, on "The Henry George Centenary," is timely and very good and fair, unlike much that is written about him and his books. It is perhaps something of an exaggeration to say that "Progress and Poverty" is widely read. At least it is true that only a small fraction of the public understand the teaching of that book. It is true that his thesis is simple—when one understands it. But some beliefs cannot be easily accepted until the mind first rids itself of adverse beliefs.

Wages of labor is an earned income, and interest on capital is an earned income; but rent of land received by the owner is an unearned income. There are simple truths, but the multitudes of the world for centuries have gone on paying ground rents without discovering the distinction.

Mr. Bittenheim is nearly correct in stating that the philosophy of Henry George has had almost no effect upon legislative action, national, state or local. In England land is almost exempt from taxes unless it is used. Idle land is nearly tax free. Here a vast propaganda is going on to the effect that "real estate" taxes are unduly burdensome and should be reduced. This is largely on behalf of land owners, not the owners of buildings.

Within a generation progress has been made in the exemption of many species of personal property and improvements on land from taxation. Personal poll taxes, common forty years ago, licenses to carry on business and occupations have been largely abolished, except where necessary for regulation. The exemption of products of industry from taxation encourages industry, while the increase of taxation on land makes land more available for use and on easier terms to the user.

Your editor is right in saying, "No American economist has ever had such a fascination as Henry George." Nothing is more fascinating than truth. The simple statement that ground rent paid the land owner is unearned, and differs fundamentally from wages and interest, is a thought to surprise and fascinate many. Many such simple unobserved truths stated in beautiful language account in part for the fascination he holds over his readers.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

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## The Stage & Screen

### *They Knew What They Wanted*

THE WHIRLIGIG of time brings many changes. "They Knew What They Wanted," a Pulitzer prize-winning play only fourteen years ago, at its revival at the Empire Theatre last week made one wonder what earthly reason the Pulitzer judges could have discovered to have given it their accolade. It seems today utterly artificial, made to a sentimental pattern, with stock figures for characters, the dialogue void of distinction or originality. It seems in short a machine-made piece of theatrical hokum. And yet fourteen years ago it was taken seriously as an important contribution to the new American drama. Such things make one doubt the validity of any contemporary critical judgment. Why are we so often fooled by what any even cursory analysis would show us is patently false? I can at least guess the reason in the case of "They Knew What They Wanted," though I did not see it when it was given fourteen years ago. The two chief parts were then acted by two of the most interesting players on the American stage—Richard Bennett and Pauline Lord. It was universally agreed that Mr. Bennett and Miss Lord gave magnificent performances as the Italian fruit-grower and the Los Angeles waitress. Genius in performance can often hide the faults of a play, can make us even believe in the unbelievable, and I would be willing to make a good-sized wager that this happened in the initial performance of Sidney Howard's play. There is no such superlative acting in the revival. Giuseppe Sterni gives a competent though distinctly old fashioned performance as Tony, and June Walker a distinctly monotonous one as Amy. We never for a moment believe either. The most effective work is done by Douglas Montgomery as Joe and by Charles Kennedy as Father McKee. But then these are the only two parts which in themselves are real.

Sidney Howard is no more, and his tragic death a few weeks ago removed from the American theatre one of its foremost dramatists. His was a real loss, and one the importance of which is not to be judged by his "They Knew What They Wanted." "The Silver Cord" is a fine psychological study, and "Lucky Sam McCarver," though I can speak of it only from hearsay, apparently has its admirable scenes. But it was in his adaptations that Mr. Howard was particularly successful. He could take another playwright's story and make it his own. Mr. Howard did not possess perhaps any great originality of conception, and his dialogue never had the bite of Eugene O'Neill's, the distinction of Robert E. Sherwood's, the subtlety of S. N. Behrman's, or the poetry and imagination of Maxwell Anderson's. But he was a very sincere and competent workman, and could interpret the ordinary American with poignancy and flavor. Perhaps in the play which is soon to be done in New York he may have created an original work of a higher order, but whether or not this proves to be the case, his loss has left

a void in the American theatre which will be hard to fill. (*At the Empire Theatre.*)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

### *End of Summer*

IT IS TOO BAD that "Harvest" (French with English titles) had that preliminary bout with the censors; for the excitement has built up an unwarranted aura around a picture that is neither a masterpiece nor a cheap bit of sensationalism. "Harvest," based on Jean Giono's novel, directed and produced by Marcel Pagnol, is a simple, fumbling, well-acted picture imbued with the poetry of the seasons and soil. To earthy Gabriel Gabrio, last inhabitant of a deserted village in Provence, comes plain Orane Demazis, the woman who has been pulling a cart, like a donkey, for Fernandel, a knife-grinder. The bulky, unkempt farmer and the hard-working, cheerful woman live together, till the soil, plant wheat, bring life to the village and find happiness. Censors objected because the couple do not marry. The film makes no plea for doing away with marriage; if anything, it stresses dignity and sincerity between humans. Arthur Honegger's fine score suffers from the film's awkward editing; but on the credit side are the strangely beautiful scenery, outstanding performances and lack of artifice.

If violin music, children, a faithful wife and the return of an erring husband bring sentimental tears to your eyes, watch out for "Intermezzo: a Love Story." For, in spite of a melodramatic trick at the ending, the ingredients of this Swedish scenario, directed by Gregory Ratoff, are put together plausibly. When the great violinist (Leslie Howard) turns from his wife (Edna Best) and family to the lovely young pianist (Ingrid Bergman) who can bring spring to his middle-aged heart, you want to tell him and the girl what they will soon discover for themselves: even rapturous lovers can't pretend there is no past; happiness can't be built on the unhappiness of others. David O. Selznick may well be proud of his production: music, sets, photography are done in good taste and style. The new Swedish girl is in a class by herself. Her intelligent beauty, poise and youthfulness are shown to best advantage.

Director Alfred Hitchcock, from whom we expect so much, lets us down in "Jamaica Inn." This Erich Pommer production, made in England from Daphne du Maurier's novel, strikes a horror mood at the beginning when a nineteenth-century gang of thieves and cutthroats lure ships to disaster on the weird Cornish coast, loot wrecks, kill all aboard. Blood is spilled so freely, murders pile up so high upon tortures, hanging, brutality, that the audience becomes immune. Charles Laughton, as "nature's gift to gentlemen," the mad instigator behind these crimes, deviates between superb acting and ham; while the English girl, Maureen O'Hara, "walks in beauty" through this unbelievable exercise in macabre suspense and violence.

Walter Wanger's "Eternally Yours" is one of those light romances that almost clicks. Under Tay Garnett's direction, David Niven's and Loretta Young's performances have a pleasant glow. But audiences, warming up to David's tricks as a magician, will be worn out by tedious argument and jumping in and out of marriage. After all every illusion is not reality.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

## The Tremendous Job

By JOHN C. CORT

THE REAL threat to the democracies lies not in military conquest by Hitler and Stalin, but rather in their own internal weaknesses. Not armies without, but widespread want, insecurity and unemployment within—these are the enemies that are really dangerous. And so it is timely that Father Bruehl has written a book \* which outlines a practical strategy for the destruction of those enemies.

Like every thoughtful man, the late Holy Father, Pius XI, was horrified at the spectacle of intense privation in the midst of luxurious plenty. He was not amused at the farce wherein, as Father Bruehl puts it, "because machines produce too much, a great number of men cannot have what they need for their daily sustenance."

His diagnosis of this cancerous disease in the body politic was that modern industrialism has been run by men who were not concerned with feeding those who made their wealth possible, nor with any other aspect of justice, but rather with the all-absorbing job of filling their own pockets and satisfying their own lust for power. And on this pirate policy, glorified by the *laissez-faire* school of economic liberalism with the high-sounding contradiction, "enlightened selfishness," the Holy Father bestowed a resounding anathema, as did his predecessor, Leo XIII, in 1891.

But neither were content merely to condemn as immoral the forces that have shaped our modern world. They also showed that those same forces were stupidly impractical and lacking in realism. Of course, their test of practicality was not the pocket of a plutocrat, but the temporal and spiritual welfare of every last man, woman and child on this spinning globe. And the Republican Party to the contrary notwithstanding, it is unnecessary for us to ask those children which is the sounder test of practicality.

In short, Pius XI reclaimed the vast wasteland of economics as rightly and necessarily subject to the law of God. In so doing he declared war on the heresy of secularism, "that fatal doctrine," in Father Bruehl's words, "which would divide life into two sections, one which comes under the control of moral principles and one which enjoys exemption from all moral laws." And elsewhere the latter adds, "Without danger man cannot be divided; and if the so-called economic man is divorced from the moral man, the operation will not only be fatal to the moral good of man, but will likewise prove destructive of his economic welfare."

And so Christian unity must be restored, a unity of business and justice—just wages, just profits, just prices, and jobs for all, a unity of widely distributed private property and social responsibility, a unity of machine production and human personality expressing itself in useful, ennobling work. Naturally, such a unity demands drastic readjustments, but always the test must be, not, "Is it good for business?" but, "Is it good for man? Is it good for all

men as free individuals freely seeking the fullest development of their own personalities, seeking, in short, the salvation of their immortal souls?" And as Father Bruehl quotes the late-lamented Chesterton, "If soap-boiling is bad for brotherhood, it is soap-boiling that must go, not brotherhood."

Although Father Bruehl does not think that machine production, properly controlled, is intrinsically incompatible with a Christian philosophy of labor, he does say that "the machine calls for a new type of private ownership and social organization. . . . The present type of individual ownership of the machine entails inevitably what has been aptly termed 'industrial feudalism.'"

The type of ownership envisioned is apparently one in which all the workers in an industry, whether of brain or brawn, collectively own that industry through its vocational group, the "new type of social organization." This is a new idea in Catholic social thought, and one that does not seem to have appealed to Pius XI, who spoke only of the advisability of modifying the wage-contract with a contract of partnership, whereby the "wage-earners are made sharers in some sort in the ownership, or management, or the profits" of the business in which they work. It would seem to this reviewer that Father Bruehl's plan would too thinly water the substance of private property and too closely approach the quick-sands of collectivism. What is needed, I believe, are not ever larger units of ownership and production, but rather smaller units, closer to the individual. Is Father Bruehl perhaps headed the wrong way?

But as for the "vocational group" plan, there can be no doubt that it is the core of the Pope's vision of a sound, Christian economy. And there can be no doubt that it is the most sensible, obvious and badly needed plan that ever suffered from a conspiracy of indifference by American Catholics, Protestants and Jews alike. Under it, our national economy would be organized according to industries, agricultures and professions into an industrial democracy of labor, capital and consumer—a cooperative commonwealth working out its own economic salvation through duly elected representatives sitting on plant committees on up through industrial councils to a sort of national economic congress at the top.

Encouraging signs in America for these new types of organization and ownership Father Bruehl sees in the rise of industrial unionism (the CIO) and in the growth of a new concept, "that of the job as property." What he has to say about this latter is, in fact, so provocative that we quote at length: "It does not matter if the new concept is ruled out by the courts. [Referring apparently to the sit-down strike litigation.] If this is done, it will revive and will not disappear until it receives legal sanction. Now, when the new idea is accepted, there arises between the employer and employee a strong bond of mutual obligation which forms the basis of a permanent and stable social relation. Out of this relation the vocational group will naturally develop. There are far-reaching implications in this new situation, for the right to the job cannot long be maintained without actual property rights in the instruments of production. The present industrial chaos may thus contain the forces which under proper guidance will

\* The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction, by the Reverend Charles Bruehl. New York: Devin-Adair Company. \$3.00.

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prove productive of a new order which restores to the dispossessed laboring masses, as Pius XI calls them, the property rights of which they have for so long been deprived."

Another difficulty is that many Americans confuse the "corporative society" of the Pope's plan with the corporative state of Mussolini's fascism. This is an error that the Pope himself warned against, pointing out that the Italian version "substituted itself in the place of private initiative . . . was excessively bureaucratic and political . . . and ended in serving particular political aims rather than in contributing to the initiation and promotion of a better social order." (*Quadragesimo Anno*.)

Although Father Bruehl brings out clearly the distinction between fascism and corporatism, in a later chapter he makes the discouraged statement that "perhaps under existing circumstances" the corporative society is impossible without dictatorship, "because liberalism and individualism are too deeply engrained in the minds and dispositions of our contemporaries." "Maybe the nations of the world," he adds, "will have to go through the hard school of fascism before they are ready to accept a corporate society based on and permeated by freedom."

These are hard words, and it seems to me that they are distinctly premature. It is time that a tremendous job of education be done here in America, for example, before our somewhat benighted democracy can be enlightened to the point where it will voluntarily accept the Pope's plan, and soon enough to forestall a dictator. But surely no such pessimism is in order now, before the Church has really begun to marshal its equally tremendous educational facilities for the doing of that job.

Nevertheless, "The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction" is a wise and important work. Father Bruehl seems to have studied all the authorities, Catholic and non-Catholic, who have written anything on a Christian social order, and he quotes from most of them to support his argument. Most of the material first appeared as articles in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, and in book form makes somewhat repetitious and disjointed reading.

All in all, however, Father Bruehl has made a major contribution to the growing literature of Christian social reconstruction. He has done more than his share of "the tremendous job that must be done."

## More Books of the Week

### Something about Propaganda

*Propaganda for War*, by H. C. Peterson. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press. \$3.00.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago at the outbreak of the world war it is easy to detect many similarities with the situation today. The majority of the American people were dead set against our entering the conflict. The President was officially neutral but personally an ardent sympathizer with France and Britain. The press of the country, especially the influential *New York Times*, was with few exceptions cheering on the Allies and heightening the sympathies of the nation for "democratic ideals." But prosperity, about which so much was made at the time,

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depended less on belligerent trade in munitions than Wall Street feels it does today. Perhaps the only difference favorable to American neutrality is that the experience of the last war has built up considerable sentiment against sending our soldiers overseas.

Professor Peterson's book is invaluable for one thing: a detailed outline of Britain's successful propaganda efforts over here, an element that had much to do with preparing us to get into the war. The cutting of the German cable kept the Central Powers' version of hostilities out of America, especially during the early days of the war. The public here got only the British version because of the strictness of British cable censorship, the dependence of American correspondents on the London papers and the success of Wellington House in getting its stories printed over here. British-American personal friendships were utilized to the utmost, especially where influential Americans were concerned; noted British authors made extensive lecture tours; the mailing list for Wellington House propaganda was swelled until it reached 260,000 Americans. Certain American publicists became British spokesmen. Increasing trade and allied loans kept up an almost irresistible pressure. All these are steps to be recognized and resisted if the present war goes on. For this reason it is worth plodding through Professor Peterson's documented but uninspired narrative. He does not present the whole story of why we went into the war.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

*The Fine Art of Propaganda*, edited by Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$1.50.

**P**REPARED by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis and sub-titled "A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches," this book appears as a primer on propagandistic devices accompanied by illustrations of their use drawn from Father Coughlin's weekly broadcasts. Seven such devices are identified; viz: Name Calling, Glittering Generality, Transfer, Testimonial, Plain Folks, Card Stacking and Band Wagon. For each of them an appropriate symbol has been selected. For example, the symbol for name calling is a turned-down thumb—an ancient sign of condemnation. Tagged to a word by the analyst of a given speech it denotes that the word so marked was employed by its author (as the analyst believes) not for its logical validity but for its known power to evoke sentiments of hostility in readers or hearers against the person or institution characterized by its means.

The positive doctrine of this book is simple. "Once we know that a speaker or writer is using one of these propaganda devices in an attempt to convince us of an idea, we can separate the device from the idea and see what the idea amounts to on its own merits." This principle, if easy to formulate, is somewhat more difficult to put into effective practice. The fact is that every one who speaks or writes, whether in private or public, uses all the devices here mentioned. It's a question of whose ox is gored when we come to decide whether one of the arts of eloquence (for that is what they are) is to be condemned or approved. When does "card stacking" give way to the "careful choice of relevant and material facts only?" When does the "testimonial" give way to the "weight of sound authority?"

Men use eloquence because they want not only to demonstrate but also to convince. They want their voices to sound in the little known regions of emotion where the

mainsprings of actions have to be found. To the orator emotion is at least as important as intelligence, because it is the office of intelligence not to act but merely to understand.

What is needed in our salesmen, orators and editors is substantive truth: i.e., subjective purity of feeling, honesty of intention, and disinterestedness—in a word, moral integrity. The quality of resonance of spirit awakened by those who address the public, considered in conjunction with the fruits of their inspiration, is the test of the public character's worth. The second half of the test lends itself, fortunately, to cold blooded application.

It is on the application of this test that Father Coughlin's deficiencies become most glaring. Anyone who has observed his followers *en masse* must shudder to think what they would do if sufficiently numerous.

I find, incidentally, that some of the expressions in the text of the present book illustrate the application of some of the rhetorical devices which the book is designed to condemn. However, it is my view that no book like this could be written in readable style were the art of rhetoric wholly neglected.

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

#### FICTION

*Frost and Fire*, by Elliott Merrick. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

**"L**IFE CLOSE to nature" is one of the favorite themes of our literature today, largely because most of the authors of that literature live a life so far removed from nature, as do most of the readers of it. Mr. Merrick seems to be an exception to that rule, for he has lived in Labrador and for a considerable period.

The theme of "Frost and Fire" is of timely interest in another way, for it is the story of the effort of one of the oppressed of the earth to escape from stifling exploitation himself and to bring freedom to his fellows, an heroic theme in any terms, but here expressed in terms peculiarly of interest to our day. For this is the story of the sub-arctic hunter and fisher, caught in a system of peonage that will strike the reader as quite the equal of any system he has heard of for brutality, and as meaner than most because the secure conventionality of the oppression contrasts so shamefully with the initiative and courage and resourcefulness of the victims. The story of the tubercular Scotch hunter-fisherman whose intelligence and self-respect make him try against hopeless odds for some way out, and then when he succumbs, of his sensitive and gifted son who fights his way up from a cruelly-burdened childhood into a strong and gallant manhood, and finally into independence and the chance for deliverance of his people, is an admirable dramatization of the possibilities of such a situation.

Not the least interesting thing about this book is the variety of strands that are twisted into it. The exposition of the situation is very much in terms of contemporary economic thinking, but the solution is still much of the age of enlightened and public-spirited individualism. The ending in particular savors not a little of the success story once so popular; it should be added, of the success story at its best. After all, there is no reason in the world why chance should always work to the undoing of the deserving, as it does in so much recent fiction. But the miraculous ending does take a little more time to be made entirely convincing than the author here gives it.

The economic struggle, however, is far from the whole story. There is the perennial fascination of seeing how



other people live, all the better because so much is seen through the eyes of a very alert and appreciative young boy. There are some glowing descriptions of scenes which most of us will never have a chance to see for ourselves, there is a fine love story and there are some stimulating suggestions of very different ways of looking at the world. The northern girl's account of life in the American city, with its crowds of unknowing and unknown human beings, moving through a world of which pretty much everything is appropriated and possessed is worth a good many pages of formal social criticism. But the best is the episode, thrilling and beautiful, in which Jan, angered by an Indian friend's making free with his desperately precious cache of food, sets out to kill him and ends up by discovering that the Indian, Mathieu, is a better man than he. For any one who has come to know Jan that is saying a good deal, for he is one of the most attractive heroes in recent fiction.

HELEN C. WHITE.

## SCIENCE

*Modern Miracle Men*, by J. D. Radcliff. New York: Dodd Mead & Company. \$3.00.

ONE CANNOT give a fair idea of the variety of topics treated in this book in a brief review. It deals largely with the frontiers of knowledge in medical science. The stories it tells are exciting and also inspiring because they show what man is doing to conquer the diseases that now destroy him. They also reveal the limitless fields for further investigation opened up by each discovery and point out the dangers attending the relaxation of our vigilance after some great killer is apparently conquered. For it may lie dormant in an immunized population and break out again with all its early violence.

The histories of particular researches show how keen minds grope for an illusive truth till some one, usually because of doggedness or deeper insight, sometimes by chance, obtains the clue that leads to a new cure. The insulin shock treatment for dementia praecox is a case in point. It is still experimental; its workings are not completely understood, but it has brought people back to their right minds. Many investigators stood on the threshold of this discovery, but it was left for one man, following a chance clue, to enter in.

The conquest of pellagra is a dramatic story. The first step was the proof that it was caused by a diet deficient in vitamins; then, when it appeared that many must continue to suffer because they could not obtain proper food, the little white pill of nicotinic acid appeared on the scene.

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of THE COMMONWEAL, published weekly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1939, State of New York, County of New York: ss. Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Edward Skillin, Jr., who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of THE COMMONWEAL, and that the following is to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912 as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, The Commonwealth Publishing Co., Inc., 386 4th Ave., New York, N. Y. Editor, Philip Burnham, 1075 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Managing Editor, Harry Lorin Binsse, Glen Cove, L. I., N. Y. Business Manager, Edward Skillin, Jr., Glen Ridge, N. J.

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HENRY A. WELLER.

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## The Inner Forum

**S**POKANE is the scene of the seventeenth annual convention of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, October 15 to 17. Civic authorities and religious leaders are prominent in the program of festivities. At the pontifical Mass at the opening of the convention, Archbishop Howard of Portland, Ore., is the celebrant, Archbishop Murray of St. Paul delivers the sermon. The civic opening in the municipal armory includes addresses of welcome from the mayor of the city and the governor of the state. The program of meetings also includes officials from both secular and Catholic colleges and organizations like the American Red Cross and the American Hospital Association.

Youth activities constitute an important sector of the meetings. This includes addresses and discussions of the present situation of Catholic rural youth in general as well as such specific activities as homemade entertainment, the Junior Red Cross, scouting, and the 4-H (Head, Heart, Hands and Health) program. The adult sessions are devoted to education, secular and religious; cooperatives; housing; agrarianism; rural clergy; missions in the countryside; public health; social work; the confraternity of Christian doctrine.

Coincident with the Spokane convention and a handy compendium of the ideas expressed there is the publication of the "Manifesto on Rural Life" prepared under the auspices of the National Rural Life Conference by Bishop Muench of Fargo and two of the priests of his diocese. It is issued by the Bruce Publishing Company of Milwaukee. This 200-page volume is a statement of principles rather than a prescription for the nation's ills, but the very statement of these guiding ideals for the family, the school and the community does itself lead directly to constructive activities for the common good. A large part of the manifesto is devoted to quotations from leading authorities on social matters. It also contains a detailed bibliography divided into subjects, by no means exhaustive but substantially useful.

### CONTRIBUTORS

Euphemia Van Rensselaer WYATT is the dramatic critic of the *Catholic World*. She has contributed articles and reviews to many Catholic papers. As the mother of three grown children—and a grandmother, too—she has reason to be thankful that AYH has no age limit.

Rev. Wilfrid PARSONS, S.J., was for many years editor of *America*; he is now Dean of the Graduate School of Georgetown University. His special interest continues to lie in the field of the social sciences.

Rev. Richard FLOWER, O.S.B., is a monk of St. Gregory's Priory, Portsmouth, R. I. He was professed at Fort Augustus, which is the mother abbey of his house, and knew Abbot Hunter-Blair well.

John C. CORT is one of the founders of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, which publishes the *Labor Leader*. He is devoting himself to improving and increasing Catholic leadership in organized labor.

James N. VAUGHAN, formerly on the faculty of Fordham University, now teaches at the New York Law School and is legal secretary to Mr. Surrogate Delehanty of New York.

Helen C. WHITE is on leave of absence from the University of Wisconsin, where she teaches English. Macmillan is publishing her new novel, "To the End of the World," this fall.

William M. AGAR, formerly of the department of geology at Columbia University, has for some years been headmaster of the Newman School, Lakewood, N. J. He is a brother of Herbert Agar.



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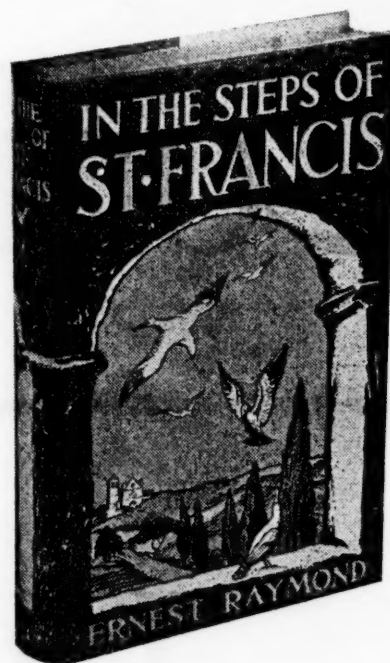
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